

# The Bride Valley Service for Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2021

## Trinity 8

### Sentence of Scripture

The Lord looks down from heaven on humankind to see if there are any who are wise who seek after God.  
(Psalm 14 verse 2)

### Hymn: All creatures of our God and King

1 All creatures of our God and King  
lift up your voice and with us sing  
Alleluia, alleluia.

Thou burning sun with golden beam,  
thou silver moon with softer gleam,  
*O praise him, O praise him,  
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

2 Thou rushing wind that art so strong,  
ye clouds that sail in heaven along,  
O praise him, alleluia.

Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,  
ye lights of evening, find a voice;  
*Chorus*

3 Thou flowing water, pure and clear,  
make music for thy Lord to hear,  
Alleluia, alleluia.

Thou fire so masterful and bright,  
that givest hearts both warmth and light:  
*Chorus*

### Call to Worship

Now is the time of the feast!

**Call in all the people – the oppressed, the hungry, the tired – all who need our company and the solidarity of God.**

Our God is generous, the cup is overflowing, the bread can be shared with all and the dance of life comes after.

**Thanks be to God. Let us worship him in spirit and truth.**

### Confession

Your presence, O God, invites us to know more truly who we are.

*A period of silence while we are open to knowing ...*

The world still waits in hunger and thirst, O God.

**Forgive our weakness, forgive our lack of faith.**

### Assurance of Pardon

We worship a God of grace. The word to us in Jesus Christ is – Our sin is forgiven!

**We celebrate our freedom, we honour the holiness of God.**

### Collect

**Lord God, your Son left the riches of heaven and became poor for our sake: when we prosper save us from pride, when we are needy save us from despair, that we may trust in you alone; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

4 Dear mother earth, who day by day  
unfoldest blessings on our way,  
O praise him, alleluia.  
The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,  
let them his glory also show:  
*Chorus*

5 Let all things their Creator bless,  
and worship him in humbleness;  
O praise him, alleluia.  
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,  
and praise the Spirit, Three in One;  
*Chorus*

*William Henry Draper (1855-1933) based on Laudato sii, O me signore St Francis of Assisi's Canticle of the Sun CCLI Licence 2370586*

### **Bible Reading: Ephesians 3. 14-end**

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Gospel Reading: John 6.1-21**

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself. When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

### **Reflection**

Hunger ...

Like most of you, I suspect, I have listened to and read this gospel story over and over again throughout the years, but reading through it afresh this week I have gained a new sense of the hunger these people were experiencing.

I don't mean the obvious, that they needed the physical nourishment which was so miraculously provided. Loaves of bread and fish aplenty!

What I see is these people, who have been following Jesus around, observing everything he does. They have been watching him at work in their midst, seeing the signs. **This man is something else!** These crowds are obsessed with Jesus, looking at the signs, the healings and the miracles. This man **must** be the chosen one, the Messiah, here right in front of their eyes.

No wonder they are persistent in following him. Who wouldn't want to be in his presence, watching out for the next miracle. And their persistence pays off ... as they witness yet another miracle, another sign of the power of God at work, this time Jesus breaks the bread and provides nourishment to the multitude surrounding him.

## **Jesus, in the breaking of the bread, satisfies their hunger ...**

They had a choice and they chose to stay and be blessed.

You may have had second thoughts about coming to church today, you may have felt disappointed at the way things are going to be, but despite all that's going on in the world, round and about us ... **you are here**, something brought you to this place, to receive from God, to be nourished by the power of the Holy Spirit, and to receive from our Lord Jesus Christ.

And learning to respond to our Creator God is what the passage in Ephesians is all about. Listen again to verse 17: "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love."

The world is big, with all the intricacies and complications that go with it. We are often overwhelmed by it all, certainly by what's been going on for the past 18 months. God is bigger, much bigger, beyond our understanding, far more than we can imagine. If we look around, not very far, we see him at work ... we see the signs of creation, everything around us speaks of being made, being created by our heavenly Father. If we stop and listen long enough we hear the buzzing of the bees and the rustling of the leaves on the trees. Even before we're awake we hear the song of the birds.

Think on this, that same creator made you, an individual, with a will of your own, God's unimaginable love lavished on you.

## **God's abundant love, enough for all the world.**

We recognise it, we see God at work, we are not here to control it, that's not our role.

We have a choice though, ignore what God is doing ... or join in. Co-operate. As we gradually learn to breathe in the air of Holy Spirit, we instinctively learn what the wind and the waves already knew – we are made to respond to God. **Amen.**

### **Anthem: Eat this bread, drink this cup**

*Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to him and never be hungry.*

*Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in him and you will not thirst.*

Our ancestors ate manna in the desert,  
but this is the bread come down from heaven.

*Chorus*

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Christ is the bread of life,  
the true bread sent from the Father.

*Chorus*

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Knowing that our loving God supplies all our needs, let us pray to him now on behalf of the Church and the world:

Father, we offer this time and the love of our hearts as we pray for the Church with all its varied ministries; for the youngest to the oldest members; for those of mellow faith and those who struggle with doubts.

Loving father: **give us today our daily bread.**

Father, we offer our commitment to pray the news each day and share the pain we read about, longing for your peace and justice in a world tense with aggression and distorted with selfishness.

Loving father: **give us today our daily bread.**

Father, we offer our homes and relationships for you to work in and transform; we offer you our meetings and conflicts and all differences of opinion for you to use for glory.

Loving father: **give us today our daily bread.**

Father we offer you our solidarity with all who suffer or are heavily burdened; hear us as we pray for their comfort and refreshment, wholeness and restoration, but above all for the consciousness of your presence in their pain, and your love for them.

Loving father: **give us today our daily bread.**

Father, we offer our thanks for lives well lived and faithful souls entering eternal life with you. Prepare us all to meet with you face to face.

Loving father: **give us today our daily bread.**

Father, we give you our lives as well as our words of praise, so that each moment from now on becomes an offering of love.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

As our Saviour taught us so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

**Hymn: O Jesus I have promised ACNY 26**

1 O Jesus, I have promised  
to serve thee to the end;  
be thou for ever near me,  
my Master and my Friend:  
I shall not fear the battle  
if thou art by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway  
if thou wilt be my guide.

2 O let me hear thee speaking  
in accents clear and still,  
above the storms of passion,  
the murmurs of self-will;  
O speak to reassure me,  
to hasten or control;  
O speak, and make me listen,  
thou guardian of my soul.

3 O Jesus, thou hast promised  
to all who follow thee,  
that where thou art in glory  
there shall thy servant be;  
and, Jesus, I have promised  
to serve thee to the end:  
O give me grace to follow,  
my Master and my Friend.

4 O let me see thy foot-marks,  
and in them plant mine own;  
my hope to follow duly  
is in thy strength alone:  
O guide me, call me, draw me,  
uphold me to the end;  
and then in heaven receive me,  
my Saviour and my Friend.

*John Ernest Bode (1816-1874) (Public Domain) CCLI Licence 2370586*

### **Final Prayer and Blessing**

**We thank you God, that you never leave us hungry and thirsty. We commit ourselves to so living in love that all are fed and know your gracious community. Amen.**

Go in peace in the power of Christ. And may food be found beside the road, living water rise forth in springs around you and the Holy Spirit restore you in the hard places. Amen.

*Sources: Liturgies for the Journey of Life by Dorothy McRae-McMahon (SPCK 2001), Prayers adapted from Prayers of Intercession by Susan Sayers (Kevin Mayhew Limited, 1999) and Hymns recorded by St Martin in the Fields, available for use in Church of England worship.*

### **Welcome to home communion**